

**California Behavioral Health Planning Council
Housing and Homelessness Committee
Meeting Summary**

Thursday, January 19, 2023

8:30am to 12:00pm

Holiday Inn Bayside

4875 N Harbor Drive, San Diego, California 92106

Point Loma Room

Members Present:

Monica Caffey, Chairperson

Deborah Starkey

John Black

Christine Frey

Vera Calloway

Arden Tucker

Barbara Mitchell

Angelina Woodberry

Erin Franco

Darlene Prettyman (virtual)

Staff Present:

Eva Smith

Naomi Ramirez

Meeting Commenced at 8:30am

ITEM 1 Approve October 2022 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the October 2022 Housing and Homelessness Committee minutes was made by Barbara Mitchell and seconded by Vera Calloway. The motion passed with no abstentions.

Public Comment

Theresa Comstock, Executive Director for the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions (CALBHB/C) shared that their organization has again made housing their priority. She expressed that she hopes the Council will make adult residential facilities (ARFs) an advocacy priority.

Bennie Tinson, Executive Director for Licensed Adult Residential Care Association (LARCA), expressed concern for residential care homes across the state and their rapid closures as well as those that are on the verge of closing. He asserted LARCA is ready to assist the state to meet demands as the facilities cannot continue to operate without proper resources and funding.

Barbara Wilson from Los Angeles County stated that there are next to no ARFs available, particularly for older adults with serious mental illness.

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ITEM 2 Welcome New Council Leadership

The committee welcomes the new Council leadership: Executive Officer, Jenny Bayardo, Council Chairperson, Deborah Starkey and Council Chair-Elect, Tony Vartan. The Council leadership discussed with committee members their committee goals as it relates to the mission and vision of the Council.

Committee Members' Discussion:

- Housing is critical to physical and mental well-being and vital to completing the vision and mission.
 - Suggested a possible name change to 'Housing and Houselessness', rather 'Homelessness,' a more appropriate classification for persons who are unhoused.
 - Continue to advocate for more funding for ARFs and produce an updated white paper with recommendations.
 - Focus on housing for youth and older adults.
 - Participate in writing design regulations for the Behavioral Health Bridge Program (BHBH).
 - Look into Housing First policies and assess who it is working and not working for.
 - Review how state laws have impeded on matters contributing to housing and homelessness issues.
 - Encourage advocacy for change of federal ruling on definition of being housed.
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Public Comment

Barbara Wilson mirrored comments made by Council members. She expressed urgency for a continuum of care.

ITEM 3 Alpha Project Presentation

Sofia Cardenas, Data and Compliance Manager for Alpha Project, presented to the committee. Alpha Project is a local non-profit organization to San Diego and provides an array of homeless services including street outreach, emergency shelter, residential treatment, permanent housing, permanent supportive housing, supportive services and case management, workforce training, and meals and food pantry. All Alpha Project Programs serve persons with mental health barriers, serious mental illness (SMI) and disabilities. Their programs are designed in partnership with behavioral health services to serve those with SMI:

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- Harm Reduction Shelter: serves those with dual-diagnosis (self-report ok, no official diagnosis required) needs.
- Tenant Peer Support Services: voucher, housing navigation, and case management support.
- Casa Raphael Residential Recovery: 90-bed residential treatment facility, Comprehensive, Continuous, Integrated System of Care (CCISC) Model.

Alpha Project seeks to hire Peer Support workers with lived experience and promote them within the organization to have peers in leadership roles.

Public Comment

Barbara Wilson from Los Angeles County inquired about the failure rate for persons who have SMI and enter into housing first model placements.

ITEM 4 Safe Village Pilot Program Presentation

John Brady, founder, and Executive Director for Lived Experience Advisers presented to the committee on their organization and projects. The organization is run by persons who have recovered from homelessness or are experiencing homelessness and is co-leading efforts to develop the Safe Village Pilot Program. The program is partnered with Downtown San Diego Partnership to expand shelter capacity, add safe non-congregate shelter options, increase outreach with professionals trained to assist those with behavioral health or substance abuse needs and deploy resources in a coordinated, compassionate, and data-driven way. Lived Experience Advisers is actively working to secure a location, assist with program proposals, and advise on programmatic elements of shelter operations for the Safe Village Pilot Program.

ITEM 5 Community Listening Session Update

Council Staff, Eva Smith updated the committee on the plans for HHC to host a listening session for consumers. The listening session will include two presentations: one from a housing expert to present on different housing models and another from a consumer with lived experience of being unhoused followed by a listening session. The committee will utilize the feedback from the listening session to formulate recommendations in a white paper. The committee is aimed to host the listening session in March 2023 on Zoom and is in the process of confirming presenters. Once a date is determined for the listening session, the committee will begin to advertise the event to various partners and wellness centers across the state. The committee will provide an update on the outcome of the event at the next quarterly meeting in April.

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ITEM 6 CA Interagency Council on Homelessness Update

Council Staff, Eva Smith provided an update on the CA Interagency Council on Homelessness (CA ICH) activities. Cal ICH recently updated its 'Action Plan' to address the homeless crisis.

Through the Action Plan, Cal ICH pursues a vision for their Council and the state's work to prevent and end homelessness focused on purposeful, action-oriented coordination and alignment among state departments. The Plan was developed through input and collaboration with over 60 community entities, public agencies, nonprofits, and other experts. It is through this input that the 5 action areas and the goals were developed:

- Strengthening Systems to Better Prevent and End Homelessness
- Equitably Addressing the Health, Safety, and Services Needs of Californians experiencing unsheltered homelessness
- Expanding Communities' Capacity to Provide Safe and Effective Sheltering and Interim Housing
- Expanding and Ensuring Equitable Access to Permanent Housing in our Communities
- Preventing Californians from Experiencing the Crisis of Homelessness

In March 2021, the Cal ICH adopted the Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness, with the expectation that the plan would be updated every year to reflect current priorities. In September 2022, they adopted an updated [Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness](#). The staff develops a progress report each year. The report is a comprehensive collection of the state's efforts toward preventing and ending homelessness in the fiscal year.

ITEM 7 Bridge Housing Presentation

Ilana Rub, Section Chief for the Behavioral Health Bridge Program (BHP) provided an update to the committee. BHP is specified for unsheltered homeless who are experiencing behavioral health challenges. The BHP program is identified to contribute to the implementation of the California Interagency Council on Homelessness' [Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California](#).

The BHP program will also be implemented in alignment with the Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act, which prioritizes BHP program resources for CARE Act participants.

BHP Program Specifications:

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- The \$1.5B BHBH funding allocation is one-time only grant funding administered by DHCS
- Qualifying applicants are county behavioral health agencies, and tribal entities
- Funding must be expended by June 30, 2027
- The emphasis of the BHBH program is on meeting the needs of the currently unsheltered population with a behavioral health condition
- Provide case management and other medical, behavioral or social services and supports onsite, such as those provided by Full Service Partnerships, which provide field capable wrap around services
- Funding cannot supplant specialty mental health and SUD services provided by counties – these must continue to be covered by Medi-Cal
- BHBH is intended to pay for housing and housing-related services that are not covered by Medi-Cal, including community supports
- Many existing facilities are willing and able to serve this population, but cannot do so without operating funding and enhanced supports, which this effort will provide

Public Comment

No public comment.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:00pm